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# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## **Attorney General Goddard encourages businesses to adopt *Code Adam* program**

(Phoenix, May 22, 2003)—In honor of National Missing Children's Day (May 25) Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard joins the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children in encouraging all Arizona businesses to develop procedures for reuniting children with their families when they become lost while in a retail store, shopping mall or museum.

In conjunction with the Arizona Department of Public Safety, through its missing children clearinghouse, the Attorney General will provide information to local law enforcement agencies, businesses and the general public in this statewide effort to protect children from abduction. He also plans to seek the support of Arizona Chiefs of Police and Sheriffs to promote this innovative program. Arizona law enforcement agencies will be encouraged to check retail stores in their area for the existence of programs to help retrieve lost children and to introduce the *Code Adam* Program.

*Code Adam*, one of the country's largest child-safety programs, was created and promoted by the Wal-Mart retail stores and named in memory of 6-year-old Adam Walsh whose abduction from a Florida shopping mall and murder in 1981 brought the horror of child abduction to national attention.

Since the *Code Adam* program began in 1994, it has been a powerful preventive tool against child abductions and lost children in more than 40,000 stores across the nation. Wal-Mart, with the help of National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), has generously offered other retailers the opportunity to implement this powerful tool against child abduction." There is no cost for retailers, museums, hospitals, amusement parks, and other public facilities to participate in this program.



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According to the FBI, nearly 2,000 children are reported missing each day in the United States. Currently 51 missing Arizona children's pictures appear on the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children web site. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) assists law enforcement in finding missing children and in helping to prevent child sexual exploitation. NCMEC works with federal, state, and local law enforcement on a daily basis and recognizes their efforts through the annual awards, which take place in conjunction with National Missing Children's Day, which is officially May 25.

Participating retailers in Arizona include Bashas', Babies "R" Us, Banana Republic, Best Buy, Burlington Coat Factory, Marshalls, Nordstrom, Office Depot, Sportmart, Old Navy, Safeway, Sports Authority, T.J. Maxx, Toys "R" Us and Wal-Mart.

More information about the Code Adam Program is available from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (1-703-274-3900) or [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com). The Arizona Attorney General's Office will serve as a point of contact for information on the *Code Adam* program. For more information contact Jane Irvine, Office for Children, Youth and Families at 602-542-6903.

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